

**Testimony of John Biederka before the Transportation Committee of
the Connecticut General Assembly
Senate Bill 289, An Act Concerning the Establishment of Tolls for the
Extension of Route 11
March 5, 2012**

TO: Chairmen Maynard and Guerrero, and Members of the Committee, Thank you for hearing my testimony today.

The notion of paying for the proposed Route 11 extension with tolls brings to light just what a poor investment this new roadway would be. Tolls work where the benefit to travelers is clearly worth the cost of the toll. This is not the case for Route 11.

The following analysis will show that the benefit would be far less than the cost imposed by the toll. Route 11 is an enormously expensive project that is justified only by a presumed need for a limited access highway linkage between Hartford and New London. In fact, highway linkage between Hartford and New London already exists by way of Rte 2/395/32. Also, Rte 9 provides similar linkage from Hartford to the shoreline just 15 miles to the west.

A study using Mapquest or Google Maps helps to illustrate the issue. The time and distance to travel from Hartford to New London along existing Rte 11/85 on a non-beach day is 56 minutes and 46.2 miles. The time and distance for the trip using existing Rte 2/395/32 is 57 minutes and 51.2 miles. Google actually identifies Rte 2/395/32 as the preferred route from Hartford to New London since it estimates the time to be 1 minute less than Rte 85. The time and distance for the trip using a new Rte 11 would be 56 minutes and 47.5 miles. Compared to the existing Rte 2/395/32, the most that a new Rte 11 would save travelers on summer beach days is 1 minute and 3.7 miles. On normal days without beach traffic, the new Rte 11 would take the same time as the existing Rte 85 and actually be 1.3 miles longer.

Based on the projected traffic and cost for Rte 11, tolls would need to be \$2-4 per trip. In my opinion, many travelers will choose the alternate existing routes to avoid such an expense even if it costs them a few more minutes of travel time.

The idea of invoking tolls to pay for Rte 11 is fundamentally flawed. When Rte 11 was first conceived, the major attraction in Southeastern Connecticut was Ocean Beach. Now the major attractions are the casinos, which are most easily accessed from Hartford via Rtes 2 and 395, so the major amount of traffic does not and will not use Rte 11.

The Rte 11 project is a burdensome investment that imposes high costs to taxpayers and travelers for little to no benefit. To ask Connecticut residents, and especially those in this area, to bear the brunt of such a flawed investment is fundamentally wrong.

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